

/Chinese, Chinese Moslems and Sedentary Tibetans/

181 use it. In this little backwater town large business deals were
436 effected, but each roll of dollars received for payment was
opened, the contents carefully examined, and the individual coins
valued a little higher or a little lower according to the Tunhwang
standard." (pp. 69-70).

423 The landowners in the Tunhwang district are mainly Chinese
whose ancestors were established here very long ago. The Chi-
181 nese farmers are more conservative than the town folks. The rural
369 rural pattern here is different from that of other parts of the North-
241 west. Here the farmsteads are dotted over the area, each stands
361 in the center of its own land and each at a considerable distance
from the other. The larger farms are surrounded by a high wall
(351) which is a small fortification, and inside the wall is a substantial
(342) house made of sun-dried bricks and excellent timber. Most of
(321) the farmsteads are spacious and built to accommodate large num-
(614) bers of people, for it is customary that all the members of a clan
live together in their generations.

631 The author of The Gobi Desert recorded another interesting
feature of the Tunhwang oasis. The record says that Tunhwang
is divided into as many sections as there are prefectures in the
whole of the province of Kansu. Its colonization brought men
from all areas, who were anxious to honor the cities which they
represented, by erecting temple buildings. The result is that the
traveller wanders through the oasis as through a replica of the
whole province of Kansu, stepping from the section called after
the town of Chingchow to that called Liangchow, from Kaotai to
Pingfan, or from Pingliang to Titao, in the course of an afternoon
(532) stroll. Near one of these temples was a very old carved stone
(192) figure of a man, which was not an idol but was said to represent
a historic personage.

157 Of the Chinese people of the wayside in the Gobi Desert
485 Miss Cable writes: "The intense isolation of the inhabitant of a
(511) small oasis, and the extraordinarily low standard of life imposed
upon him, produce a strange mentality. His normal condition is
torpor. He sits or lies on his mud bed and thinks of nothing.
Only when a traveler arrives does he experience the discomfort
of rousing himself, but then though it may be cold or windy, he
must leave the pleasant stuffiness of his bed-living-room, throw
off the greasy coverlet which he has drawn over his crossed legs,
come into the open and give the service, which is demanded of
him as innkeeper. The life of the innkeeper's wife is more bare
and poor. Clothing, which has some place in the thought of
nearly every woman, is, to her, absolutely nothing but a protec-
tion from cold and a covering for her nakedness. The other inci-
dents of her life are concerned with food and the birth of her
children. She knows that her husband has some money, but she
has never thought of money as a means of securing comforts

THROUGH JADE GATE

796 steamed rice containing the fruit of the jujube tree is
265 popular, and dried apricots, macerated in water, are
in demand as a cooling drink. Not far off are long
tables sheltered by an awning, where men will sit for
hours sipping tea and playing cards.

796 Within the temple buildings the idols are dressed up in
782 gay silks, and each family on arrival presents itself at
the various shrines to make obeisance, and burn incense.
Thin sheets of yellow paper, on which are inscribed
petitions to the gods, are lighted at the shrine lamp,
waved in the air, and wafted upwards, the manner and
height of ascent indicating the favour or displeasure of
785 the deities. Some of the older women, who have
796 practised asceticism for a lifetime and are prepared for
any self-abnegation so that they may in the next
incarnation obtain a more auspicious rebirth, perform
elaborate rituals with touching devotion.

796 On such a fête-day all the temple treasures and silken
536 embroideries are on view, as also magnificent peacock-
feather screens and umbrellas. The din of voices from
vendors and visitors is completely overwhelmed when
once the theatrical musicians commence their per-
formance. Cymbals, pipes, and drums sound their
loudest, while above them soars the shrill falsetto voice
of the stage managers, announcing the details of the
performance.

• 351 The temple grounds are beautifully kept. The
796 fragrant tree-peony opens its blossoms when the peach
and pear trees drop their petals, and all through the
summer months a succession of beautiful flowers
decorates the fancy landscapes of the temple gardens,
miniature lakes and bridges supplying a foreground to
sacred mountains arranged on the same small scale.

796 The whole scene, from the turquoise sky, the snow-clad
mountain ranges and the gorgeous profusion of flowers,

1 [of Kanchow on Festival Days -- Analyst]

702 as a soldier, and afterwards, leaving will be desertion.'

'I am in the employ of the Lady Missionaries. They are quitting the country soon, but I must stay with them as long as they need me.'

'That is quite right,' said the sergeant. 'Go back and talk it over with them, and,' he added, 'if there are any more young Christian men in the Church who want to enlist, tell them to come along, they are the kind of men we want.'

'Welcome Home,' who had sallied forth with the bearing of a simple young farmer, returned to us an hour later with the deportment, gestures and style of an accomplished orderly. He greeted us from the back of the breakfast table with a military salute, and clicked his heels whenever we spoke to him. The joy of realising he was to be one of Feng's men endued him with an enthusiasm that transformed him. At the appointed time we released him to fulfil his engagement, and three days later, as we were driving to a farewell luncheon party, we passed the drill-ground where recruits were learning the goose-step. 'Welcome Home' caught sight of us, turned his head and smiled rapturously, whereupon the corporal's iron hand smote him on the shoulder, and he stood once more at attention. The next day he called in company with a 'centurion,' who informed us that there was every prospect of our late cook quickly securing a commission. 'In this army,' he said, 'we are like one big family, and we look to Marshal Feng as children to a father.'

351 The last few days were busy with meeting social claims. Various members of the Christian circle begged us to take one more meal with them before we left. The ladies of our landlord's family entertained us in the summer-house of a flower-garden. It was the season when the fragrant tree-peony is in bloom, and

THE ONWARD TREK

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we strolled between the flower-beds listening to singing **351**
 birds, which, alas! were in cages concealed among the
 branches of the trees. The arrangement of the garden
 was highly skilful and artificial. In one place a
 miniature mountain showed tiny paths connecting
 shrines and temples, all built to scale, while the whole
 was watered by the ramifications of a sparkling little
 stream, on the banks of which stood diminutive men,
 women and children—the whole happy-family scene
 conveying the impression of a life spent in Elysian
 fields, which no disturbing element could touch. A good **351**
 deal of the verdure in the flower-beds was supplied by **262**
 asparagus plants, known to the Chinese as 'Dragon's
 Beard,' which seems to be indigenous to Kansu, but **[824]**
 which, strange to say, the people do not care to eat. **[137]**
 Many are the bitter weeds, leaves and buds which the
 Chinese cleverly convert into palatable food, but the
 delights of asparagus have not yet been discovered by
 them, and it is distressing to a Westerner to see the
 shoots allowed to go to leaf without ever being cut.

The meal served to us was of the usual kind, com- **262**
 mencing with dessert and *hors d'œuvres*, and pro-
 ceeding to chicken, fish, birds' nest soup, and sweet
 rice; then reverting to sharks' fins, seaweed, and
 apricot-kernel syrup; ending with plain boiled rice,
 rolls, and several basins of vegetable soups with meat
 balls, while on this occasion a seasonable dainty was
 provided in the shape of light fritters, made from the
 petals of the tree-peony. As we were by now on a
 footing of intimate friendship with these ladies, the
 social intercourse and delightful food thus prepared for
 us made a pleasant interlude coming between the
 exacting claims of the last days.

Late one evening a Suchow man of our acquaintance, **521**
 Mr. Li by name, called, bringing with him a gentleman **172**

574 good thing, control themselves masterfully, - as long as they did not go to sleep? The fan tai once gave a large, solemn dinner. He was the treasurer of the province of Kansu, the official just below the viceroy who at that time also controlled the foreign office of the 574 province. Before we sat down to dinner I was asked for my "expert" 411 opinion on the latest invention of His Excellency. The provincial treasurer also had charge of the equipment of the army and the arsenal of Lanchow. He had now made a new kind of "three-man-rifle," a large muzzle loader which two soldiers had to lay across their shoulders while a third aimed and pulled the trigger. Amazed at such "cleverness" which had already resulted in a few hundred of this model, "Lanchow 1905," being ordered from the government arsenal, I silently espoused His Excellency's cause, and in token of his gratitude for my suggestion that it might be better to use steel instead of Shansi iron at a somewhat exposed place, I was presented with a photograph of the inventor. /154/

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At the feast itself there was also a Japanese present, who made himself out to be an officer and who was on his way back from Turkistan. He appeared in European dress but his hair which was longish in the middle but shaved on the sides and in front, showed plainly that as a rule he preferred to appear incognito as a Chinese or a Mongol and wear a queue, because the hair that had been left was just long enough so that a queue could be tied to it. He was, as he repeatedly assured us, on a purely scientific journey and had set out only to look for the se bu siang, the "four-not-equal" (1)

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1. Elaphurus Davidianus, Chinese: se bu siang, was first discovered by Armand David in the imperial game park at Peking. The strange, stag-like animal was named "four-not-equal" by the Chinese because it was said to have the antlers of a stag, the feet of an ox, the tail of a donkey, and the hair of a mule. The species is today regarded as extinct. The game park as such has not existed since 1900.

which in his opinion still exists in the mountains on the Russian border. He said he had not been able to get it only because of the hostile entanglements of his country with Russia!

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At this dinner we sat in an airy, half-open but very pretty wooden pavilion in the fan tai's large garden in which there were lakes with many bridges and small boats between reed and bamboo

shrubs. It was too bad that at the time of my visit the water was completely covered with a thick crust of ice. But we foreigners were very much surprised to find such an idyllically quiet and beautiful spot in the middle of this crowded, noisy city, and I was told that this garden had been built more than 100 years ago. We sat in it for three hours, wrapped in our winter overcoats, ten of us around a large round table, and were served countless dishes. The dishes stood on the table for only a few minutes and always only one at a time, otherwise they would have turned ice-cold. With each new course everyone dipped into the common pot in the middle of the table with his chopsticks which, according to custom, he had first licked clean, then rummaged around in it like all the others to find a nice piece which he placed on the little porcelain spoon of his neighbor, amid many compliments, as well as on the little silver plate the size of a dollar, which even at the most luxurious feasts in China takes the place of our plate. Meanwhile, the icy cold caused one's fingers to grow stiff and made it more difficult to manipulate the thin chopsticks. There were two open pans filled with coals beside the table, over which one could warm one's hands, but soon the Chinese as well as the Europeans timidly drew their hands into the fur sleeves of their winter clothes and even the best eaters let the dishes pass in review, most of which were good only on the surface and underneath consisted of less tasty filling, for example a thick raw turnip and such things. Conversation and drinking became the main thing toward the end and, as usual at such dinners, everyone was still waiting for the rice. A Chinese dinner consists only of hors d'oeuvres, so to speak. The main food, even at the largest feasts, even when a dinner takes three hours to serve, consists of steamed rice which is offered at the very end. Each guest is given a few bowls full of this and after that he immediately departs. /155/

Once when I asked the fan tai how it happened that Tung fu hsiang could still keep so many soldiers for himself, he immediately denied this fact and answered: "Tung fu hsiang is dead, he is positively dead!" And the Mohammedans in Da miao and the mandarin in Tsing ylan were all said to have lied. An official in the foreign office told me later that the Tsing ylan hsien should have known that under no circumstances must it be admitted that Tung fu hsiang still has soldiers; his confirming it could cost him his position if I reported him.

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